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## THE USE OF ORNAMENTAL ELEMENTS IN THE CREATIVE WORK OF AZERBAIJANI CARPET PAINTERS AT THE EARLY XX CENTURY

**Abstract.** The article contains information about the artistic expression of ornamental elements on Azerbaijani carpets woven in the early XX century. As we know, Azerbaijani carpet art has a very ancient history. The main achievement of this history is its important role in defining national identity, understanding and evaluation of cultural heritage, and symbolic justification of ornamental features. So, the invaluable contribution of prominent professional carpet-painters and folk carpet-makers, who worked in different regions for centuries played important role in development of carpet art. In general, as in previous times, in Azerbaijani carpets woven in the early XX century the marks of individual creative methods have been manifested quite clearly. In spite of this fact classical traditions and artistic peculiarities, formed in different regions also were displayed very often. The use of ornamental elements in the work of Azerbaijani carpet-makers at the early the XX century was based on the classical style, with some addings or changings. As for new motifs, they appeared as result of changes in life.

**Key words:** carpet, ornament, artistic style, piled, plot, element

**Introduction.** It's known that Azerbaijani carpet art has a very ancient history. One of the main values of this history is determining of its important role in the national identity, in its cultural heritage, and symbolic basis of the ornamental features. So, the invaluable work of prominent carpet-painters and folk artists, who worked for centuries in different regions of Azerbaijan, helped to save and to develope carpet art as one of main cultural priority. Azerbaijani art of carpet weaving developed for centuries and in each period the national carpet art was enriched by new and original elements and small ornamental forms. All these ornaments and elements were based on classic

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forms and gained attention of specialists. And thanks to this, new elements used in carpet both by folk and professional artists lead to engendering of new compositions.

**The interpretation of the main material.** These elements in each artist's work differed by color, composition, and new forms of stylization, created new quite magnificent forms, demonstrated their individuality. The predominating of contrasting color solutions also let create new original carpets and this creative process continues till the present day.

The period of the carpet development, dating back to the early XX century proves that new forms in all six carpet weaving schools of Azerbaijan developed basing on classical traditions. So, each detail, even the smallest one, added and stylized by individual carpet maker meant the engendering of new ornamental elements. This tradition, of course, continues nowadays also.

In the color solution of these carpets contrast colors predominate. For centuries the carpet makers expressed the main information, their feelings and emotions by means of elements, placed in the center of the composition.

We can note for example that in the compositions, created in the early XX century, secondary elements were often placed symmetrically on the right and left of the central element. The classical style was developed by means of various forms. This phenomenon, these transformations can be observed throughout all course of the carpet art development.

The main feature of Azerbaijani carpets is that in them empty spaces are not used. This fact indicates the rich ornamental peculiarities and possibilities of our national carpets. Thus, the so-called "filling" elements cover the middle field throughout all carpet. Although we have enough material that proves the using of general features on carpets, we also often find quite new elements in the artistic and technical analysis of each sample.

E.g. in the "Sor-Sor" prayer carpet of Guba-Shirvan type made in the early XX century new motif in the composition draws attention. It must be also pointed out, that the main elements of the classic "Sor-Sor" carpet consist of "Shirvan buta", placed on vertical and horizontal axes. However, as its seen from the name of the carpet, the other element characterizing it is the "mehrab" element, which is one of the main, even obligatory elements in prayer carpets.

On the carpet, mentioned above very interesting composition is pictured. This composition has changed the pattern and as a result a new ornamental

solution is created. So, the carpet maker managed to transfer the new ornamental composition, formed in his imagination on the carpet. The ornament elements and the plot of the composition let come to conclusion, that this carpet was woven by the “terekeme” tribe carpet-makers and they tried to picture their lifestyle on the carpet.

As it's seen, here carpet maker's main purpose was to picture season mode of life of terekeme, their domestic animals (horses, dogs, sheep) both in the winter and in summer. With this aim, the carpet maker decorated the carpet by “mehrab” elements, which are placed both the middle field and inside and outside of it and divides it's space into two levels. In the middle the scene from real life is pictured. The dynamic images of the hills, cattle flocks, animals and people migrating to the plateau is also very expressive. So, the carpet-maker based his work on the peculiarities of “Atli-İtli” (“Horses and Dogs”) composition.

In the carpet the pictures of other living objects are given also. The birds, deer and gazelles of different form are pictured as filling elements on the background of carpet. Although the mentioned details are of very small size, the weaver managed to picture their character by means of motions and represented them as element of ornament.

Other ornamental filling elements used in “Sor-Sor” carpets are “buta” elements, characteristic for this kind of carpets, they are also of great interest. The carpet maker presented them as stylized images of trees or shrubs. The border line is also typical for “Sor-Sor” carpets. The bushes in the main border also look like fully stylized bird forms. In the middle of the carpet a colorful “butas”, represented as trees are given. These elements connected with other elements strengthen the general positive aura of the carpet. The overall composition is divided into front and back part by the elements, given in different sizes. E.g. the horsemen of larger sizes are brought to the front part, and “trees” (butas) are pictured in a smaller scale and placed in back side.

The images of deer running fast and looking back are often pictured in scenes of hunting. As for carpet, mentioned above, the stylized pictures of animals are given on the carpet in several directions. All three horses are pictured in the same position, their legs are bending and moving forward. So, all composition is completely obeyed to general idea.

“Buta” elements, which are interpreted as trees on the carpet, the horses and other animal images placed among them, combine and complete the plot

of the composition perfectly. As a result of the artistic analysis of the carpet, it can be said that carpet-maker didn't limit only by new ornamentation using, but by means of different realistic scenes changed even the structure, the whole composition of the prayer carpet.

Another sample of carpet, in which new elements were used is the piled carpet woven in Shamakhi in the 1940s. The central picture of carpet is picture of Moscow Kremlin, which was considered as symbol of Moscow. Woven in one of the villages of Shamakhi, this piled carpet attracts attention by its original elements. In fact, it consists of two carpets connected to each other. In both carpets the same composition is used. The composition of the carpet middle field consists of a large element with two medallions of different form and inscriptions at the top of the middle field.

The inscriptions "Allah Muhammad ya Ali", "Good wishes" and "Good Way" in the upper part of the carpet prove that the carpet is dedicated to somebody or to definite event. The element in the center of the carpet is close to the architectural ones and the star element at its highest point resembles the Moscow Kremlin. The carpet-maker used architectural form of Kremlin and as a result created new stylized ornamental elements.

Different structure, different artistic solution, which characterizes the cost of mind of new era, proves that, alike in all other spheres of arts, the regime had influence on carpet making also, despite the fact that the carpet weaving developed traditionally. The ornamentation of carpet is the product of purely personal imagination, based on the synthesis of classical and modern traditions.

Thus, according to the real form of architecture, the pictured element is conventionally divided into three parts. In the Kremlin clock and on other details on the Kremlin two medallions and three other elements are placed.

The border of carpet is very simple, here thin "mother" (main) border and element "madakhil" is used. On the main border the patterns "wheel of Fortune", in "madakhil" the patterns "protective talismans" were used.

Another Karabakh carpet of the early XX century is woven with using of the scene of the "Ovchuluq" ("Hunting"). This carpet is interesting by its form and new ornamental elements.

It's known, that Karabakh since X century earned the fame as the largest center of different crafts. Karabakh passed through great evolution in wool and cotton producting. Both in mountainous and lowland zones

of Karabakh a great success in carpet making was achieved and carpet art here differed by its original peculiarities. In process of historical development, the Karabakh carpet school managed to preserve its originality.

In the artistic design of these carpets geometrical and floral motifs, paintings of symbolic character and compositions, taken from different spheres of decorative-applied art and pictorial art were used. E.g. ornament “buta” was always considered as national Azerbaijani ornament and was widely used in Karabakh carpets. Besides, in Karabakh carpets various medallions, as well as animal images (horse, tiger, lion, deer, eagle, etc.), beautiful landscapes and hunting scenes were pictured also.

The Karabakh carpets are of elongate form, and their color palette is very rich. This palette reflects the most gentle colors of Karabakh nature, here bright-red, nutty, goldish, yellow, pink color prevail. Thank to the sort of threads, the Karabakh carpets have very dense, high and soft pile, this peculiarity is based on rare characteristics of local wool.

The motifs of Karabakh carpets were always in prime focus because of their originality. The composition of these carpets is based on the principle of horizontal symmetry. Earlier in the compositions of Karabakh carpets along with beautiful drawings the hunting plot was also very popular.

But if we look at the hunting compositions on Karabakh carpets, we can see not dynamic hunting scenes, but only the attributes and symbols of hunting. Later, the process deepened and in the first quarter of the XX century, hunting completely disappeared as a theme and gave its place to animal images connected with each other in terms of composition.

In this article the samples of carpets based on “Ovchuluq” (“Hunting”) composition are studied. In these carpets the pictures of horses and dogs, typical for carpets of such type are presented in unusual way. Their forms, given in motion are repeated and directed in the same way.

Horse and dog images, which are considered to be the main elements of the carpet, are the main theme of the composition. Looking carefully, we can see on both animals roundish shapes which are the result of a simple imagination of carpet-maker. The carpet-maker tried to picture the images closer to their look in real life and that's why pictured them “spotty”. This also means that the folk carpet-makers do not exclude the transferring on their carpets the pictures of animals that they observed in nature. That time it has become a tradition. In order to revive the forest, the animals (horse and

dog) are pictured surrounded by birds, trees and other plants placed on the background of carpet.

The pattern of the carpet mentioned above was woven repeatedly and it's composition scheme is based on the same principle. The main motive is preserved and some elements are added in more bright colors. A number of small elements were added to the background of carpet along with saving of main figures. Thus, the carpet maker basing on his thought, improved the composition slightly. In group of these elements human figure, "buta" elements, figure of small dog, new flower element and a number of geometric elements are included. The compositions with motifs of such kind were later named "Atli-İtli" ("Horses and Dogs"). The composition was used in carpets basing on different schemes but their content remained the same.

In first version elements in the border line of carpet are more alike human figures. In the second version the carpet is woven with border in which carpet-maker created a new "tree" form and placed them in a row. These elements on the border of both carpets are stylized picture of every event that carpet-maker has ever observed in real life or some new element created in his imagination.

Another carpet of Karabakh school woven on the basis of the "Atli-İtli" composition (early XX century) also draws attention. In general, the "Atli-İtli" composition is based on the "Ovşuluq" composition. In the carpet sample mentioned above, the carpet-maker followed tradition and pictured horses and dogs in the middle of the carpet in a horizontal direction. But alike other carpets, this carpet also has its own original features. It's quite natural because every carpet-maker tries to reflect in the work his own subjective imagination. In this carpet, the carpet-maker pictured the world of fairy tales as he could. The carpet-maker managed to create its own very complicated composition in which used 12 main elements and many other filling and auxiliary elements. In middle field of carpet six horse figures are pictured. Four of them are directed to the right and two others are directed to the left. Under each horse leg colored stripes typical for palaces and carpet elements. There is a picture of a dog between both horses. As a result, very simple carpet with unusual ornamentation and elements was created.

In addition to the main elements, the filling elements placed in the middle field are also remarkable by their variety. Inside these elements, along with a number of small geometrical patterns small-sized human figures are placed

also. However, it is interesting, that here carpet maker avoided traditional forms and pictured human figures in the opposite direction.

From the point of view of the new ornament, the border line draws much attention. At first glance, these elements look like simple elements of geometrical form. But if look attentively, it becomes clear, that these elements are stylized deer heads.

The folk carpet- maker completely stylized the animal, taken from real life and developed it to the level of carpet ornament. As a result a new beautiful composition that forms the rapport for the border line was created. This novelty affirms gentle taste, rich imagination and creative abilities of carpet-maker.

The new embroidery elements are successfully combined with each other on the carpet, and create very complete form. And most important of all, these elements on the carpet complete each others. In general the study of each carpet pattern of different period demonstrates some changes in each of them. Such creative approach determined engendering of new elements.

“Fakhrali” carpet, woven in Ganja region of Azerbaijan in the early XX century is a vivid sample of told above. According to artistic traditions of carpet art on the upper part of mentioned carpet the arch is stamped and the elements of Moslem Oriental architecture are used. (The forms, resembling mosque forms are met very often in carpet art).

The carpets of “Fakhrali” kind usually have a simple composition. At the top of the mentioned carpet an arch element is given. In the bottom part two triangular forms are placed symmetrically, face to face. In their edges “hook” details were used. Inside the arch, the stylized picture of Tree of Life – symbol of the Turkic world- is pictured in very lyrical forms. The middle part of the geometrical shape on the bottom also contains geometrized floral patterns.

The central medallion is of very simple quadrangular form, its border is formed by delicate triangle-shaped elements. In this carpet harmony is created thanks to the hooks and linear elements on the dark background.

The triangular forms given on the top of carpet are also in the opposite direction at the bottom and connect with each other by means of the angles. In the lower part of carpet stylized flowers with six-petal and under them three ornaments of “baklava” form are placed. So, they are united with similar elements in central part and focus attention on them. Their edges were solved by means of the “hook” elements, which almost eliminated impression of simplicity in the carpet.

**Conclusion.** In general, as in previous times, in Azerbaijani carpets woven in the early XX century the marks of individual creative methods are manifested quite clearly. In spite of this fact classical traditions and artistic peculiarities, formed in different regions were displayed more often. Thus, the study of the use of ornamental elements in the work of Azerbaijani carpet-makers at the early the XX century proves that new ornaments were created basing on the classical style, with some addings or changings. As for new motifs, they appeared resulting on changes in life.

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### *Münəvvər Hacıyeva (Azərbaycan)*

### **XX əsrin əvvəlində Azərbaycanın xalçaçı rəssamlarının yaradıcılığında ornament elementlərindən istifadə olunması**

Məqalədə XX əsrin əvvəlinin Azərbaycan xalçalarında yeni ornament elementlərinin bədii ifadəsi metodları ilə bağlı maraqlı məlumatlar təqdim edilmişdir. Məlumdur ki, Azərbaycanda xalçaçılıq çox qədim tarixə malikdir. Bu sahədə əsas uğurlardan biri xalçaçılığın milli xüsusiyyətinin müəyyən edilməsində, mədəni irlərin dərk olunması və ornament motivlərinin rəmzi məzmununun anlaşılmasındakı roludur. Azərbaycanın müxtəlif regionlarında əsrlərlə işləyən bacarıqlı xalçaçılar, eləcə də xalçaçılığa qiymətli töhfələr vermiş proffesional rəssamlar xalça sənətinin inkişafında böyük rol oynamışlar.

Bütövlükdə, XX əsrin əvvəlinin Azərbaycan xalçalarında, eləcə də keçmişdə toxunmuş xalçalarda hər bir ustanın fərdi xüsusiyyətləri və yara-

diciliq metodları açıq-aşkar görünür. Eyni zamanda, Azərbaycanın müxtəlif regionlarında formalaşmış klassik ənənələr və bədii xüsusiyyətlər həmçinin tamamilə aydın görünür. XX əsrin əvvəlində Azərbaycan xalçaçılarının yaradıcılığında ornament motivlərindən istifadə olunması müəyyən yenilik və dəyişiklikli klassik ənənələrə əsaslanır. Yeni motivlərə gəldikdə, onlar həyatda baş verən dəyişikliklərlə əlaqədardır.

*Açar sözlər:* xalça, ornament, bədii üslub, xovlu, element

### **Мунааввер Гаджиева (Азербайджан)**

#### **Использование орнаментальных элементов в творчестве азербайджанских художников по ковру в начале XX века**

В статье представлены интересные данные, связанные со способами художественного выражения новых орнаментальных элементов в азербайджанских коврах начала XX века. Известно, что ковроткачество в Азербайджане имеет очень древнюю историю. Одним из главных достижений в этой сфере является та роль, которую национальное ковроткачество сыграло в определении национальной самобытности, осознании культурного наследия и понимании символического содержания орнаментальных мотивов. Неоценимый вклад, который внесли в ковроткачество профессиональные художники а также народные умельцы-ковроделы, ведущими работавшие в различных регионах Азербайджана сыграл огромную роль в развитии коврового искусства.

В целом, в азербайджанских коврах начала XX века, как и в коврах, сотканных в прежние времена, отчетливо проступают индивидуальные черты и творческий метод каждого мастера. Вместе с тем, классические традиции и художественные особенности, сформировавшиеся в различных регионах Азербайджана, также проявляются совершенно ясно.

Использование орнаментальных мотивов в творчестве азербайджанских ковроделов в начале XX столетия базировалось на классических традициях с определенными новшествами и изменениями. Что касается новых мотивов, то они связаны с изменениями, происходившими в жизни.

**Ключевые слова:** ковер, орнамент, художественный стиль, ворсовый, сюжет, элемент